



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

S/S

May 31, 1972

To: The Acting Secretary

From: AF - David D. Newsom

Reduction of US Mission in Libya

The Libyan Ministry of Unity and Foreign Affairs told Ambassador Palmer May 30 that the Libyan Government considers it necessary to limit the US Mission to seven diplomatic and seven administrative American members in Tripoli and Benghazi. There are now 35 Americans at the two posts in Libya.

Ambassador Palmer was told there were no political reasons for the reduction. The Note from the Ministry said the reductions were because of the prevailing conditions in the two countries; the imbalance of the number of members of the Libyan mission in the US and the US mission in Libya; and the lack of resources (including human resources) at the Ministry of Unity and Foreign Affairs which makes it impossible to undertake the necessary coordination.

We are not sure what connection there may be between this and the recent reductions in the US Interests Section in Cairo. The UK Mission was reduced to the same number of positions. We understand the French and Soviet Embassies may also be reduced. It may be that the Libyans view this reduction as some sort of first step towards their cherished goal of consolidating the Foreign Ministries and foreign policies of the three members of the Confederation of Arab Republics.

We are awaiting recommendations from Ambassador Palmer before taking further action. Press guidance has been prepared.

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Concurrences: AF/N:JJBlake
AF/EX:WGBradford
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